

THE MOUNTAIN CHANGERS: LIFESTYLE MIGRATION IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

Gary Sigley (Asian Studies, The University of Western Australia)

ABSTRACT

In the early twenty-first century, the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues its remarkable transformation that encompasses all facets of social life. One of the most significant, visible forms of such change is urbanization. Chinese cities are rapidly expanding and, according to some reports, will grow by a staggering 400 million people over the next several decades. In just under forty years China will have transformed from a predominantly rural to urban society, a pace of urbanization not matched in previous human experience. Yet while migration in China has in recent decades been overwhelmingly of people moving from the countryside to the city, and to a lesser extent (but also quite large given the size of China's population) migration of more well educated urbanites and professionals between cities, there has been a small flow of people in the other direction, that is, of those leaving the metropolises of the eastern seaboard to seek out alternative lifestyles in the mountains of western China, and in particular to places like Yunnan in the southwest. These are akin to the "sea changers" and "tree changers" found in more affluent Western societies and can be included in the relatively new phenomenon of "lifestyle migration." This paper provides a preliminary overview of this phenomenon in the context of Dali, a prefectural city in Yunnan Province.

INTRODUCTION

At 12:20 pm on the 19th of February 2013, when I saw the exit sign on the expressway for 'Dali Xiaguan', I wanted to cry! Beijing - Zhengzhou - Lichuan - Chongqing - Kunming - Dali, we took this route as we drove our own car on a journey of 3,090 kilometers. We left behind a familiar city and now have a new life in a strange place. We don't know how long we will be here. Everything is to be decided by how we feel day by day (Iko 2013).¹

This quotation captures the essence of this paper in three key ways. It summarizes the lifestyle migration dream of a growing cohort of Chinese and foreigners looking for somewhere to live beyond the pressures, congestion, and pollution of the Chinese metropolis. It evokes the emotional attachment people can have to place in this quest for a better life, even a place they hardly know or have never visited. And it demonstrates the importance of modern transport networks as conduits for migration and the freedom embodied, literally, on the "open road." As the Chinese population, economy, culture, and global footprint grows ever larger, the use of modern technologies of movement and communication actually make it smaller. The mountains looming in the far west that for centuries conjured up images of the edges of civilization are now closer than ever. More than that, they have become desirable. That the quotation refers to Dali, a small prefectural city in Yunnan Province, is even more apposite, for Dali has become the Chinese Mecca for lifestyle migration and is the pivotal focus here. Not every story that begins with tears of joy and feelings of jubilation ends in contentment and bliss. The minutiae of daily life in an unfamiliar place can quickly dispel misconceptions and illusions. This paper seeks to explore these issues in detail and bring to light the changing dynamics of relations between people and place in a rapidly changing China.

¹ I thank Zhao Ziyi, Brian Kirbis, Gerry Groot, Doug Smith, Warwick Powell, Gao Quan, Brian Linden, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. The author takes final responsibility for the paper.

In the early twenty-first century, the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues its remarkable transformation, one that encompasses all facets of social life. Urbanization is one of the most significant and visible forms of social change. Chinese cities are rapidly expanding and, according to some reports, will grow by a staggering 400 million people over the next several decades. In just under forty years, China will have transformed from a predominantly rural to urban society, a pace of urbanization not matched in previous human experience. The expansive deltas, such as those on the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers, and other major political and economic hubs, like Beijing and Chongqing, will become mega-metropolises home to tens of millions of people. If this is not enough, there will be several hundred almost nondescript "smaller" cities with populations of more than a million. And thanks to declines in fertility, China's population growth rate will have slowed considerably. Nonetheless, the overall population will still be a formidable 1.6 billion by 2050. During this process vast swathes of rural land and countless villages will be expropriated by the seemingly ever expanding cities. Mao Zedong described the peasant revolution as a strategic process of "the countryside surrounding the cities," but now in the urban revolution the situation is tipped on its head as the cities surround and literally consume the countryside.

Image 1. The character depicted here - *chai* 'demolish' is often painted on buildings that are to be demolished during a process of residential or commercial construction. As Chinese cities have been transformed the *chai* character can be widely seen across both urban and rural landscapes. This process of demolition and construction, however, is not just physical. *Chai* is also a metaphor for "destroying the old to build the new." That is, the "old" society of the Maoist and Dengist eras is being demolished and something "new" is being constructed in its place. This is taking place in the cities and countryside of the eastern seaboard, and also in the mountains of western China. Seemingly no part of China is escaping the influence of *chai*.²

² All images are the author's unless otherwise indicated.



Rural to urban migration is of course a key feature of this process. Migrant workers from the countryside are moving to the

cities and industrial zones *en masse* to work in factories, on constructions sites, as domestic help, and to take on many dirty, dangerous and menial jobs that local urban residents deem undesirable. Migrants are seeking to make a better life for themselves and their families. As they do so they also send remittances back to the villages and in turn help to improve the lot of those who are left behind. In a land of over one billion people it is dangerous to generalize and not every story of migration is necessarily a happy one, and not everyone who is left behind - usually the young, old and infirm - finds their lot improved.³ There are standard narratives of migration in the mainstream media that celebrate the transformative effects it has in turning *disuzhi* 'low quality' peasants into *wenming* 'civilized' citizens. The reality is a lot more complex and the challenges faced by migrants are daunting. China, through the system of *hukou* 'household registration', continues to have serious impediments restricting migrant workers' access to key services in urban areas such as health and education. But even so, these obstacles, along with the general sense of unaffordability, have not detracted from the relative desirability of urban living.

The force behind this migration - its condition of existence, the thing that makes it possible - is mobility. We live in the most mobile age of human existence. "Mobility," and the "compulsion to mobility" (Urry 2007), has been described as one of the characteristic features of our modernity. During the Maoist period (1949-1976) human mobility was severely restricted. The aforementioned system of household registration tied people to place. Movement between locations required official permission. Rationing, especially in the cities, meant that outsiders would have had a difficult time acquiring the necessities of life even if they ever happened to find themselves in an urban context without official sanction. Mass migration during this period was a rare event and only occurred with the approval of the Party-state, such as during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

³ The plight of those left behind was tragically brought to recent national and worldwide attention by the suicide of four "left behind" siblings (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/14/chinese-police-investigating-deaths-of-left-behind-children-find-suicide-note>, accessed 20 July 2015).

when the young *hongweibing* 'Red Guards' were provided subsidized travel to trek across the length and breadth of the nation both learning from the masses and spreading Maoist revolution. As I shall show, some of those young revolutionaries ended up in the very borderlands of China in Yunnan Province.

Image 2. Left: Participants at a tea conference walk on the "Ancient Tea Horse Road" in Puer, Yunnan. In the background is the construction of China's first international expressway linking Kunming and Bangkok (now completed). Right: One of the tallest bridges in the world (the Honghe Bridge) is part of the Kunming-Bangkok Expressway and a good example of the engineering challenges in road construction in mountainous Yunnan. Journeys through mountainous Yunnan that took weeks or even months now only take a matter of hours thanks to the terraforming transformation of modern day transport infrastructure.



In short, the reform period has witnessed a remarkable shift in the ability of people to move freely. This has been important for urbanization, but also for facilitating new industries that depend on travel, such as tourism, and ushering in the age of the privately owned automobile (automobility). On this front, the government has invested considerable resources in building a modern transport infrastructure that is the bedrock of people's ability to be mobile. This is akin to a kind of terraforming in which the landscape is literally cut, blasted, tunneled, and moved, facilitating mobility in the process and having an almost exponential effect on many forms of social,

economic, and cultural activity in its wake. As I show below, this is no mean feat in southwest China with its mountains, gorges, and swift flowing rivers. One of Mao Zedong's famous essays, that most Chinese at the time could recite verbatim, concerned the Chinese fable of the *yugong yi shan* 'foolish old man who moved the mountain'. In this essay, Mao exhorted the reader to use sheer willpower and determination to reshape society in his revolutionary image. Now equipped with the resources, it seems that the engineering capability and a modernizing mentality (old fashioned "nation building") the Communist Party of China (CPC) is literally following through with the exhortation to *yishan tianhai* 'move mountains and fill oceans'. The remotest corners of China are being connected. This essay partly seeks to highlight the significance of the changes that this brings.

Yet while migration in China has in recent decades been overwhelmingly of people moving from the countryside to the city, and to a lesser extent (but also quite large given the size of China's population) migration of more well-educated urbanites and professionals between cities, there has been a small flow of people in the other direction, that is, of those leaving the metropolises of the eastern seaboard to seek out alternative lifestyles in the mountains of western China and, in particular, to places like Yunnan in the southwest. These are akin to the "sea changers" and "tree changers" found in more affluent Western societies (Osbaldiston 2010) and can be included in the relatively new phenomenon of "lifestyle migration." In this essay I will refer to these migrants as "mountain changers" and note that their ranks include Chinese citizens as well as many foreigners who call China home.

The remainder of this essay is divided into two sections. The first section provides a historical overview of Yunnan Province and the prefectural city of Dali with an emphasis on migration and place identity. In noting the historical significance of migration and trade through China's southwest, this section concludes by exploring how in the post-1978 reform period the forces of transport infrastructure construction, the rise of foreign and domestic tourism, and the renewed search for places of respite and escape from the negativities of urban life, combine to work towards reshaping Yunnan's image,

and in particular Dali, as a desirable destination for short and long-term residence. In terms of Dali, this section examines the construction of nostalgic, fantastical, and romantic Chinese imaginaries through film and literature, namely, the films *Wu duo jin hua* 'Five Golden Flowers' (1959), *Xinhua nufang* 'Breakup Buddies' (2014), and the popular novel *Tianlong babu* 'Heavenly Dragons' (1963).

The second section examines the influx of the "mountain changers" to Dali. Comparisons with the phenomenon of lifestyle migration abroad and the current state of research in this field are also made. Once the broad parameters are laid out the paper begins to explore the particular "Chinese characteristics" of the "mountain changer" experience. Particular reference is made to the deployment of the Chinese cultural concept of *jianghu* 'rivers and lakes' as a means of highlighting certain autochthonous elements. The lifestyle migration experience of Dali appears to have a broader socioeconomic basis than those studied in Western contexts. In this sense, and through a study of the case of globalized, cosmopolitan and *jianghu* space of Renmin lu 'People's Road' in Dali, I conclude by highlighting certain unique features of Dali's mountain changer culture.

SECTION ONE: MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND PLACE IMAGINATION IN YUNNAN

In Lincang Prefecture, a rural subtropical area in southwest Yunnan near the borders of Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, a group of 150 people from different walks of life came together to create the Shengming chanyuan 'New Oasis for Life Commune' (Levin 2014). This Buddhist inspired community sought to create a self-sustaining and spiritual alternative to what they regard as an alienating and materialistic society found in the sprawling cities of modern China. As is discussed further below, these people are drawing upon a long Chinese tradition of escape to the mountains for the purposes of solitude, meditation, and respite. What is interesting about the New Oasis instance is the choice of location. To have created such a

community in Lincang before 1978, or even before 1949, would have been extremely difficult. Lincang is a border region that for most of its history has been inhabited by various non-Han minorities. It was a remote and often dangerous place for the unwary visitor, a place that James C Scott (2010) regards as part of a larger highland zone he calls "Zomia" that for much of history was beyond the immediate reach of centralized states. But times have changed and the once "remote" and "dangerous" places have now been made "accessible" and "tame." Unfortunately for the members of this community, the local authorities looked upon this religiously inspired endeavor with great skepticism and used various measures to make them disband.

I use this example as a small vignette to highlight the emergence of alternative community construction and lifestyle migration in contemporary China. Until more recently, urban and industrial development in China has been largely concentrated along the eastern seaboard. This is not surprising given the natural and historical advantages eastern China possesses. Most of the population live there; it has excellent access to sea ports; and the river deltas and plains are conducive to the construction of transport networks, the development of agriculture to sustain life, and so on. Yet as economic growth accelerated during the 1990s and beyond, the socio-economic gap between eastern and western China grew ever larger. While wealth transferal and economic development policies that sought to lift western China out of its developmental malaise had been in existence for many years, it was not until the central government launched the Xibu dakaifa 'Western Development' campaign in 2000 that significant amounts of resources were put into the serious development of western China (Goodman 2004).

Western China is a very large region and development has not been even. But it is fair to say that key pockets have, since 2000, received notable injections of funds to build the transport infrastructure required for "economic lift off." Some locations, such as those under scrutiny here, also have assets, in the form of natural beauty and historical/ cultural interest, that are conducive to tourism. Aside from the exploitation of mineral resources, which in many cases has had a deleterious effect on the local environment, these tourist zones are the "pockets" where development has been most

often concentrated. As noted, the focus of this essay is Yunnan Province, and in particular the prefectural city of Dali. As I shall soon show, it is Dali's natural beauty and historical and cultural features that make it attractive to both domestic and foreign tourists as well as the mountain changers.

Image 3. Map of the People's Republic of China. Dali is located in the southwest border province of Yunnan.⁴



The cities of Yunnan are now experiencing the urban expansion that cities in eastern China know only too well. With a population of six million, Kunming, the provincial capital, is by far the largest city in Yunnan (Yunnan has a total population of forty-five million with thirty-seven percent residing in urban areas). The skyline of Kunming now resembles those of other large Chinese cities with row after row of residential and commercial skyscrapers as far as the eye can see (Zhang 2010, Zhu 2002). The property boom has also

⁴ Source: <http://tinyurl.com/onlowch>, accessed 26 November 2015.

made its way to Yunnan's smaller cities, such as Jinghong, Tengchong, and Dali. In these locations there is a considerable proportion of new residential property that is targeted at eastern China's emerging middle-class who have enough disposable income to purchase an investment holiday home. Indeed, some tourist operators specialize in bringing in wealthy clients from the eastern seaboard specifically for the purpose of showcasing "holiday retreat" residences that include spas, saunas, entertainment facilities, and sometimes golf courses. That people are now considering moving to Yunnan, either permanently or on a seasonal basis, represents a remarkable shift in how Yunnan has been understood in the Chinese public imagination. Yunnan, or at least certain parts of Yunnan such as Dali, have transformed from places largely regarded as undesirable to destinations that are now much sought after for temporary respite or a more permanent lifestyle change.⁵

Yunnan has been an important destination and thoroughfare for migration for thousands of years.⁶ Since its proper incorporation into the Chinese dynastic state during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), wave after wave of Han Chinese migrants, mainly travelling from Sichuan down through Zhaotong Prefecture, moved to Yunnan and settled in one of the many fertile basins scattered throughout the mountainous terrain. The migration was not always exclusively of the Han Chinese. Certain larger basins were already occupied by other ethnic minorities such as the Dai in Sipsongpanna (Ch: Xishuangbanna), or the Naxi in Lijiang, and for our interests here, by the Bai people in Dali. Other minority groups such as the Yi recount tales of migrating from China's northwest. Indeed, Yunnan has been a very ethnically diverse region for a very long time. There has also been a lot of fluid cross-marriage and cross-assimilation (that is, of

⁵ The international dimensions of this migration transformation are evident in a golf resort on the outskirts of Kunming developed by Singaporean developers targeting both domestic and Singaporean visitors, with permanent villas and condos. Singapore is now within six hours of Kunming making this flow of capital and people conceivable and realizable. I thank Warwick Powell for reminding me of this particular instance.

⁶ See Giersch (2006), Lee (2000), Mullaney (2011), and Yang (2008) for more detailed historical work on Yunnan.

ethnic minorities "becoming Han," and of Han "becoming other ethnicities").

Yunnan became an important border region through which a number of historic trading and migration routes pass that have for millennia connected the *zhongyuan* 'central plains' of eastern China to Mainland Southeast Asia and beyond. Most notably these include the Nanfang sichou zhilu 'Southern Silk Road' and Chama gudao 'Ancient Tea Horse Road' (Sigley 2013). The caravan traders also settled across Southeast Asia, in Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam.⁷

Nonetheless, Yunnan also had a reputation as a dangerous frontier zone. To get there from the "central plains" was a difficult journey of several months. Yunnan was seen by many Han to be inhabited by savage barbarians, infested with life-threatening diseases and miasmas, not to mention wild man-eating beasts. Not surprisingly Yunnan was used by the dynastic state as a destination for political and criminal exile (often a life sentence in which those being exiled would take their entire families with them). Some of the areas that were sparsely populated by the Han were sites for the establishment of *bingtuan* 'military colonies', a colonizing and control strategy used by the dynastic state in remote border regions.

This practice continued after the CPC took control in 1949, especially in the far western region of Xinjiang. This image of Yunnan as an undesirable destination persisted until the 1970s when Red Guards from other parts of China as far away as Shanghai, were sent to the subtropical environment of Sipsongpanna to assist in the development of China's infant rubber industry. The stories of the hardship faced by these young urbanites were captured post-1978 in

⁷ We are reminded in recent years of the continued importance of this land route by the attempts of North Korean refugees and discontented Uighur to leave China via Yunnan into Southeast Asia. In terms of the former see "US concern over N Korea refugees 'returned by Laos,'" <http://tinyurl.com/hhcuzmh>, accessed 7 July 2015; 'South Korea wants 'defector' orphans protected', <http://tinyurl.com/jk4kdoy>, accessed 7 July 2015. Regarding the latter, consider the Uighurs who were the assailants at the 1 March 2014 Kunming railway station attack. It was reported that the assailants had originally sought to leave China via Laos (see <http://tinyurl.com/jutgqzr>, accessed 7 July 2015).

memoirs and television dramas. Needless to say the vast majority returned to eastern China at the first opportunity.

Image 4. A snippet from a billboard advertisement for Puer tea located in busy Jinghong Airport. The mountain is Kawagarbo (Ch: Meilixueshan) located on the Yunnan border with the Tibet Autonomous Region. At 6,740 meters it is the tallest mountain in Yunnan. In the bottom left-hand corner is a typical Puer tea cake (a form of compressed tea that makes it convenient for storage, transport, and exchange). Next to the tea cake is a horse caravan making its way on the Ancient Tea Horse Road. The trees on either side are free standing ancient tea trees. From the perspective of hegemonic pedagogics the tea road here serves to draw the observer's attention to the historic role the tea trade played in uniting the diverse peoples in this region, especially between Yunnan and Tibet. It also nostalgically harks back to a time when mobility was more quaint and at a pace far removed from the speeds of today.



However, as China entered the 1980s, and especially the 1990s, Yunnan's somewhat negative image began changing in part due to the rapid development of domestic tourism. In the 1990s, as disposable incomes began rising, the Chinese authorities revealed plans to develop a large-scale domestic tourism industry. Yunnan, and in particular Sipsongpanna, Dali, and Lijiang, is a main

destination. The tourism development plan has been extremely successful. Total tourism revenue in 1995 was six billion yuan. By 2011 it had reached 130 billion yuan (*2012 Yunnan Province Statistical Yearbook*). Alongside tobacco and pharmaceuticals (the latter stems from Yunnan's rich botanical diversity), tourism is now one of Yunnan's most important industries.

Thus by the turn of the twenty-first century, Yunnan retained the image of an exotic destination, but one that had been "tamed" and made "safe," at least in the areas frequented by tourists. At first the Chinese tourists were only short term visitors. Most joined organized tourist groups working within a specific system of tourism agents, accommodation, *jingqu* 'scenic zones', and so on (Nyiri 2006). Over time, however, as the Chinese tourism and leisure market began to diversify, other independent travelers arrived on the scene, both in the form of backpackers and small groups of family members and/ or friends. New tourism locations not on the official mass tourism circuit began to open up, catering, for example, to the interests of hikers, birdwatchers, and nature photographers. This diversification in turn enabled more flexible itineraries and for people to stay in one place for longer periods, something that was impossible on a fixed mass tourism itinerary.

To return to the theme of mobility, the development of a modern transport infrastructure is a main factor enabling this transformation in Yunnan's fortunes. During the 1980s and 1990s, the mass tourism market relied mainly on the construction of airports at key tourism destinations within Yunnan. The road networks between Yunnan's cities and regions remained very basic even by the early 1990s. My first journey from Kunming to Dali in 1992 took over seventeen hours. With the construction of a modern expressway that journey now takes five hours.

Image 5. Chinese tourists follow their local Bai guide on a tour of Foreigner Street in Dali. Fortunately the megaphones of days gone by have now been replaced by wireless microphones and headpieces.



The development of a modern transport infrastructure, the expansion of affordable public transport, and the rise of private motor vehicle ownership have all contributed to reducing what is required to move from one place to another physically and temporally. This has been referred to in other contexts as "time-space compression" (Harvey 1990), "time-space distanciation" (Giddens 1990), and "automobility" (Featherstone 2004). Such terms suggest that once inaccessible and undesirable regions and destinations are now easily accessible, facilitating the movement of people for purposes such as employment, tourism, and lifestyle migration. Dali has become one of the most desirable destinations in Yunnan in this regard. It is therefore appropriate to now provide some background to Dali itself and outline certain features that make it a popular destination for short and long-term visits.

The Mountain Changers

Image 6. A tourist map of Dali. The Cangshan Mountain range is on the left. Xiaguan, the new administrative and commercial center, is situated at the bottom left of Erhai Lake. "Dali Old Town" appears on this map as "Dali Ancient City."



Dali: A Cosmopolitan Town on Ancient Trading and Migration Routes

Dali is an ancient town occupying a premier location on the shores of Erhai Lake at the feet of the Cangshan Mountains (the highest peak rises to 4,100 meters). Sitting at an elevation of 2,200 meters and at a low latitude, Dali has a pleasant yearlong climate. The ancient town is located on an important crossroads from which one can travel west to Myanmar (Burma), northwest to Tibet (through Lijiang and Deqin), north to Sichuan, and southeast to Kunming and beyond (Sipsongpanna, Laos, and Thailand). Both the aforementioned Southern Silk Road⁸ and Ancient Tea Horse Road pass through Dali. Indeed, Dali is a key trading post in an economic macro-region that includes markets as distant as Nepal and India (along with other locations listed above). Each year in the third month of the lunar calendar, Dali hosts the Sanyuejie⁹ 'Third Month Street' Festival, a combination of cultural and sporting festivities, religious worship, and trade fair that has for centuries been attracting visitors and traders from near and far. There is, for example, a special section for Tibetan traders, even to this day.

⁸ The importance of the Southern Silk Road cannot be underestimated. Although not as well-known as its northern cousin, which crosses the land bridge connecting China to the Middle East via Central Asia, the Southern Silk Road was the preferred route for traders and pilgrims when conditions in Central Asia became unstable and dangerous. The Southern Silk Road terminated in Myanmar where it connected to the Maritime Silk Road, thereby allowing the traveller to journey to the Middle East (and beyond) via India and the Red Sea.

⁹ Here *jie* 'street' refers to the system of local markets that were once common all across China, but which nowadays are only found in certain parts of Western China and are even then gradually disappearing. These markets had different frequencies, some being weekly, every ten days, once a month, or once a year. Yunnanese sometimes refer to these markets as *ganjie* 'going to the street'. The Dali Third Month Street Festival is actually based on an annual *luomahui* 'horse and mule market' of great antiquity and importance (the Song Dynasty actively sought out the horses of Dali to strengthen the ranks of its army), which were once common across Yunnan, but are now only found in several more remote mountain locations.

Image 7. Third Month Street Festival collage. Clockwise from top left-hand corner: a Tibetan mother and daughter run a Tibetan goods stall at the festival; an indistinguishable (could be a Chinese ethnic group, could be Hawaiian!) dance promoting precious stones and jade from Myanmar; mules for sale at the horse and mule market; and a local Bai music orchestra.



The Third Month Street Festival traces its history to the Nanzhao Kingdom (738-902), an independent kingdom sometimes in allegiance with the neighboring Tang Dynasty, sometimes allied with the Tibetan kingdom (Tubo), and sometimes at war with both (Backus 1982). The Nanzhao was powerful in its own right and at its peak controlled a vast territory and tributary system extending into mainland Southeast Asia and the plains of Sichuan (in 829 the

Nanzhao army sacked the Chinese city of Chengdu). The local Bai inhabitants of contemporary Dali claim to be the direct descendants of the Nanzhao.¹⁰ As shown below, the Nanzhao now features prominently in the contemporary imaginary of Dali, mainly through the fictional fantasy work of Louis Cha/ Jin Yong.

The Nanzhao was in turn followed by the Dali Kingdom (973-1253) that cooperated closely with the then ruling Song Dynasty. It was weaker and smaller than the Nanzhao Kingdom. It was during this time that Buddhism became well-established in the region. Many of the Dali kings abdicated the throne to spend the remainder of their lives in contemplative meditation. The Dali Kingdom was in turn conquered by the Mongols in 1253, signaling incorporation into the Chinese dynastic state. Dali, the political, cultural, and economic center of Yunnan, at this point gave up this position of importance to Kunming.

During the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, not much of major historical importance occurred in Dali, save for the few decades of the Panthay Rebellion (1856-1873) when Dali became the capital of a short lived sultanate.¹¹ Over half a century later during World War Two,¹² Dali became an important Chinese and Allied transport hub in the war with the Japanese Imperial Army. Indeed, the horse and mule caravans for which Dali was famous reached their peak during this period. A number of merchant families became extremely wealthy and built luxurious mansion and villas, such as those in Xizhou Village. Some even emulated modern forms of architecture and art deco that were all the rage in faraway Shanghai and other metropolitan centers.

Dali played an important role in frontier history as a polity that was for many centuries situated between other powerful states, notably the Han Chinese state to the north, the Tibetans to the west,

¹⁰ I have heard similar claims by members of the Yi ethnic group in nearby Weishan.

¹¹ The Panthay Rebellion was a multiethnic uprising led by Chinese Muslims (or Huizu 'Hui' as they are also commonly known). The Hui were well-established residents and traders along the ancient trading routes and have a strong presence in Yunnan to this day (see Atwell 2005).

¹² In China, it is known as the "War of Resistance Against Japan."

and the Burmese to the south. In many respects Dali developed a cosmopolitan culture, a common feature of settlements on important trading routes. Dali was a major conduit for the movement of people, commodities, and ideas such as Buddhism. I will later return to this point about Dali's relative openness and tolerance of other peoples and cultures.

Dali in the Contemporary Chinese Imagination: From Liberation to Tourism, From Revolution to Fantasy

The next major event for our purposes is the "liberation" of Dali in 1950. The Maoist period (1949-1976) ushered in a period of relative isolation for China's southwest border regions. With the Chinese borders closed and tightly policed, the historic role of places like Dali as conduits for trade and people is drastically curtailed. However, Dali did not totally disappear from the national imaginary. Indeed, through the production of the 1959 film *Five Golden Flowers*, Dali catapults to national fame. Probably for the first time in its history, Dali became a household word, a place associated with beautiful and exotic minorities, majestic mountains, crystal clear lakes, and rich flora and fauna, especially butterflies and cormorants, the latter trained to catch fish in Erhai Lake.¹³

The film documents the story of a Han Chinese film crew seeking to record local Bai folk music and customs. It involves a light-hearted love story between a young Bai couple. Compared to the stiff and dull revolutionary movies that followed in the next few decades when Maoist puritanism reigned supreme, *Five Golden Flowers* was a welcome source of entertainment. The frenzy of the Great Leap Forward (1957) is the background political setting for the film in a society experiencing the ongoing tumults of revolution. It was thus extremely popular at the time. It was later charged by the Maoists as being reactionary and disappeared from screens until the late 1970s.

¹³ The following section depends heavily on the excellent work of Notar (2006).

Nevertheless, the memory of its scenes and stories was deeply implanted in the Chinese imagination.

Image 8. Jinhua and Ahpeng, the female and male Bai protagonists in the 1959 film *Five Golden Flowers*.¹⁴



It is thus unsurprising that when the local authorities, following the call of the central and provincial governments to develop domestic tourism, began marketing Dali as a tourist destination for Chinese tourists that scenes and stories from the *Five Golden Flowers* featured prominently. Imagination and travel are bound together. As Notar (2006) has noted, the attractions developed around the film were the only source of real interest in Dali for many Chinese tourists. To cater to and stimulate this interest, the local authorities and tourism developers begin to shape Dali into a kind of "Five Golden Flowers Theme Park."

It must be noted that *Five Golden Flowers* only triggers an emotional and nostalgic response in those of a certain generation. For cohorts born in the decades after the 1970s it holds little appeal, and

¹⁴ Source: <http://tinyurl.com/p93d8n8>, accessed 26 November 2015.

the revolutionary themes come across as dated and tired compared to the flashy films of the present day. Not to be outdone, authorities dug deeper and this time decided to draw upon the representations of Dali, and in particular the historic Nanzhao Kingdom, that are depicted in the fantasy novel *Heavenly Dragons* by Hong Kong author Louis Cha. *Heavenly Dragons* is in the classic style of the Chinese knight-errant story with complex plotlines involving competing schools of martial arts and magic. It is a genre much loved by Chinese readers and Louis Cha is regarded as the most accomplished writer in this style.¹⁵ One appeal of this kind of fiction is the world of drifters, troubadours, travelers, and scoundrels (good, bad, and ambiguous) who operate in a murky world somewhere between state and society. The Chinese refer to this social milieu as *jianghu* 'the land of rivers and lakes', making reference to an impenetrable zone inhabited by outsiders. The theme is a much used trope in Chinese literature and popular culture such as in the classic novel *Outlaws of the Marsh* (circa twelfth century). *Jianghu* is a useful concept for describing part of the mountain changer culture in Dali and I will return to it below.

On the basis of the scenic attractions associated with *The Five Golden Flowers* and *Heavenly Dragons*, as Notar further notes, "Dali itself can become a theme park" (2006:100). I also add to this "theme parkization" the redevelopment of Dali Old Town itself. The broadening of the main road and conversion into a pedestrian mall confirms the convergence of consumerism and the touristic experience. Dali has thus been refashioned into a pastiche and collage of images that are at once historical, national, ethnic, fantastical, and global. Some of this serves a well-discussed (Anagnost 1997, Oakes 1998) pedagogic function to educate both tourist and local subject on the essentialized unity of the multiethnic Party-state, providing a sense of cohesion and a normative backdrop against which to indulge in nostalgia and measure progress, i.e., to measure one's own progress against those more "backward."

¹⁵ For those unfamiliar with his work, the style is similar to that depicted in the successful Ang Lee (2000) film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Image 9. The main entrance to the Dali Heavenly Dragons Film Studio Theme Park.¹⁶



Mobility is a key ingredient in this discursive mix. Indeed, mobility was itself seen as a pedagogic and transformative tool early on in the reform period. The aforementioned Maoist rustification movement of the 1960s and 1970s also contains elements of subjective transformation attached to mobility, but I will not labor that point here.

In the 1980s and 1990s, rural to urban migration was seen as a way to raise the *suzhi* 'human quality' of rural dwellers. Urbanites traveling to western China as tourists were also seen to positively raise farmer "human quality" through some form of exemplary osmosis by expressing *xianjin shenghuo fangshi* 'advanced ways of life' that ruralites would emulate (Chio 2014).

Dali has recently added another arrow to its tourism quiver, this time in the form of a more youthful interest in sexual experience

¹⁶ Source: <http://tinyurl.com/otdl32t>, accessed 26 November 2015.

and romance. During the reform period, China has witnessed the emergence of a self-orientated culture of romance, dating, and "one night stands" that appear in stark contrast to the sexual conservatism and puritanism of the Maoist era (Farrer 2002, Sigley 2006). This culture is more prevalent in the cohorts born in the 1980s and 1990s and permeates almost all aspects of popular youth culture including literature, music, and film. The sense of independence, self-growth, and discovery that is part of youth travel as a backpacker or independent traveler also contains a strong sense of sexual exploration and fulfilment. Once again imagination, but this time in the sense of sexual/ romantic imaginaries and travel, is bound together with destinations such as Dali and nearby Lijiang having gained reputations as places for sexual gratification, if not love and romance.

This depiction of the coupling of place and sexual desire was captured in *Breakup Buddies* (2014), a film post-dating Notar's (2006) examination of the *Five Golden Flowers* and *Heavenly Dragons* phenomenon. The film did extremely well in the box office, breaking numerous Chinese cinema records. *Breakup Buddies* is a road film cum romantic comedy telling the story of a young man in Beijing who, having just broken up with his girlfriend, takes to the road with his "best buddy" to end up on the shores of Erhai Lake where a romantic entanglement with another woman takes place. It is the contemporary Chinese version of the road trip, a film based on mobility, travel, and romance. The film speaks directly to the reform era generations, to the omnipresence of digital communication, and the apparent ease (for some) of hopping into a car and embracing the "freedom of the open road." Dali serves as the place of the "exotic other" blessed with clean air, beautiful scenery, and unique cultures where one's fantasies can be played out beyond the stifling confines of the eastern metropolis.

Chinese informants in Dali commented that the numbers of visitors increased noticeably in the wake of the success of *Breakup Buddies*. But I are getting ahead of our chronology here. Before the Chinese themselves rediscovered Dali it was the foreign backpacker who paved the way, a process of discovery to which I now focus on.

Image 10. Left: The three main protagonists from the 2014 film *Breakup Buddies*.¹⁷ Right: A shop sign in Dali cashing in on the search for romance by whimsically suggesting that in addition to "pizza" and "wireless networks" you can also find "affairs" within.



Dali and the Foreign Imagination: From Colonial Adventures to Global Lonely Planeteers

As far as foreign knowledge is concerned, Dali was relatively unknown to the outside world until the 1980s. Dali was mentioned in a number of travelogues by foreign travelers and adventurers, most famously by Marco Polo in the thirteenth century, although it is unlikely he ever visited the area. In the nineteenth century, Southwest China became a favored destination for the famous "flower hunters" who came to high altitudes in search of new varieties of camellia, rhododendron, azaleas, primulas, and other exotic flowering species to adorn the gardens of the emerging middle-classes in the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and North America (Gribbin and Gribbin 2008, Mueggler 2011). In the first decades of the twentieth century, rival British and French governments considered the feasibility of constructing road and rail networks via Southeast Asia and Yunnan that would provide a "backdoor" to the eastern Chinese market. As Arthur Purdy Stout (1912:33) put it:

¹⁷ Source: <http://tinyurl.com/olmxsj7>, accessed 26 November 2015.

The story of exploration in Yun-nan, the southwest corner of the Chinese Empire, by foreigners has in almost every instance, been inspired by the desire of the English and French to draw the trade of western China on the one hand towards the Indian Ocean and on the other towards the Gulf of Tonkin and the China Sea.

Western Catholic and Protestant missionaries also established themselves in places like Dali and the surrounding region with varying degrees of conversion success (not much success among the Bai) (Glover et al. 2011). The Sinologist, CP Fitzgerald (1941), offered a fascinating account of his year in Dali (1938) in *Tower of the Five Glories*. Other than that, Dali remained relatively obscure in the foreign mindset until China's doors were once again opened in the 1980s.

As noted above, after 1949 the Chinese borders closed, the foreigners of Dali either left, were jailed, or were deported. From that time until the early 1980s as the "bamboo curtain" fell, foreigners had little access to China, let alone Dali, and the only news was via the official Chinese media and films such as the *Five Golden Flowers*. As China entered the period of *gaige kaifang* 'reform and openness' in the late 1970s, the borders were again reopened, and adventurous foreign tourists were some of the first to revisit Dali after a hiatus of thirty years. These were the first wave of backpackers, or "lonely planeteers," the latter referring to the pivotal importance of *The Lonely Planet* travel guide in providing basic information on travel, accommodation, culture, and what to do and see for the intrepid traveler. "Intrepid" is the appropriate term as it conveys how difficult it was to reach places like Dali, a point I noted above based on personal experience. It is also important to stress the significance of *The Lonely Planet* in mapping out an itinerary that made it possible for foreign travelers with little or no command of Chinese to reach the desired destination. During the 1980s, Dali became a well-established destination on a Yunnan backpacker itinerary that included Kunming, Dali, Lijiang, and Zhongdian, the latter renamed "Shangrila" (Xianggelila) for place-branding purposes.

A number of local Dali entrepreneurs made good use of the opportunity to establish cafes, restaurants, tour guide services, and bicycle hires. At first, all foreign visitors were obliged to stay in state-run guesthouses, but later official approval was given to establish budget hostels. The foreign backpacker and the tourism service system that was established to cater to their specific needs and interests represents Dali's first reintegration with a globalizing world, and the rediscovery of Dali's historical position outlined above as a cosmopolitan conduit for the movement of people, commodities, and ideas.

This scenario also represents the first contemporary coming together of local Bai culture and outside consumers that works towards creating a "touristic culture" amenable to the foreign tourist gaze. This "gaze" is quite distinct from the domestic Chinese "gaze." The former is not informed at all by films such as *The Five Golden Flowers* or books such as *Heavenly Dragons*. While foreigners are seemingly more interested in "authentic" local culture, they also come to consume that culture within a given system of cultural provision. Ironically *Lonely Planet* provides the knowledge for the adventurous backpacker to get "off the beaten track" and discover an "authentic experience." Yet, over time as the number of lonely planetees increased, the itinerary became a popular "off the beaten track" that eventually included a range of services that make the experience less "authentic" and more conducive to a globalizing backpacker lifestyle that included comfort zones such as cafes and bars serving foreign beverages and such food as the iconic banana pancake.

An interesting twist demonstrating the multilayered complexity of the tourism phenomenon in Dali was the authorities renaming a street that was the first focus of cafes, restaurants, and hostels catering to the foreign market. It was renamed Yangren jie 'Foreigner Street', an indication and recognition of the important role foreign tourists had in establishing the Dali tourist scene. With the influx of hordes of domestic Chinese tourists Foreigner Street has become a set part of the tourist schedule. These days while visiting Foreigner Street, you are more likely to see groups of Chinese tourists being led by local Bai women tour guides clad in ethnic dress strolling past cafes and restaurants that now cater more to Chinese visitors

than to foreigners (see Image 5). As discussed below, the action has moved to People's Road. Notar (2006:1) observes that,

Whereas they [foreign backpackers] had once congregated in this borderland town in the Himalayan foothills of southwest China to get off the beaten track and view exotic minority peoples, *they were now the objects of exotic interest for crowds of cosmopolitan Chinese tourists.* (emphasis in the original)

With the popularization of mobility the tourist gaze has been "democratized."

Image 11. The street in Dali Old Town that was home to the first foreigner orientated bars, cafes, and restaurants that became such a popular novelty that it was renamed Foreigner Street. Ironically, groups of Chinese tourists now take guided tours of Foreigner Street to soak up the "exotic" ambience and perhaps catch a glimpse of "foreign tourists in their natural setting." The further irony is that now Foreigner Street has been largely redeveloped to cater to the tastes of domestic Chinese tourists.



The fact that the Old Town of Dali and the new town of Xiaguan are separated by a distance of approximately twenty kilometers has so far saved Dali from over-development. Before 1949, the Old Town was the region's political, economic, and cultural center. Afterwards, the People's Government opted to develop the town of

Xiaguan as the new administrative and economic center given its more convenient location and ample space at the juncture between the transport routes to Kunming and Baoshan. Xiaguan has since experienced most of the modern development, even in the contemporary period, so much so that it now is almost indistinguishable from other modern Chinese cities, albeit with the lake on one side and mountains on the other.

Lijiang, the historic town further up the road, has not been so lucky. The new town of Lijiang has grown up directly beside the Old Town adding a sense of congestion and overdevelopment. Lijiang has also been designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, contributing to its fame and appeal. It is thus unsurprising that the tourists to Lijiang greatly outnumber those to Dali. Lijiang, by many accounts, has become extremely commercialized, commodified, and expensive. Dali, by contrast, has little chance of World Heritage listing, and with a buffer zone between the old and new towns has had enough space to develop various niches catering to different markets. The overall vibe in Dali is quite distinct - more laidback and accessible - than the highly commercialized, noisy, and expensive spaces of Lijiang.

Early in the twenty-first century, Dali had a well-established foreign tourism market still high on the backpacker circuit itinerary, a strong and dominant domestic mass tourism market that had radically reshaped local representations of Dali and Bai culture, and a burgeoning domestic Chinese backpacker and independent traveler market. These forms of tourism mobilities combined to transform Dali into a modern cosmopolitan tourism mecca. It is on the basis of these conditions plus the relatively clean environment, good weather, and natural beauty, the pull factors that began attracting Dali's next wave of visitors, the "mountain changers."

Scholars such as Appadurai (1996) and Benson (2011) argue that imagination serves as a "wellspring" for migration, inspiring movement and being carried along by people to their destinations. From the above, it is clear that Dali, and those in Dali responsible for constructing "place branding" and "location image," have rich and colorful resources to draw upon. Benson (2011:225) further stresses that while "research on migration often focuses on the act of physical

movement, there is another aspect of mobility that needs to be taken into account: imaginative travel." Indeed, Salazar argues that this is a central feature of migration:

Migration is as much about these imaginaries as it is about the actual physical movement from one locality to another and back. Migration always presupposes some knowledge of or, at least, rumors of 'the other side' (2010:56).

Let us now travel to "the other side" and see how "imagination and migration" are playing out in the theory and practice of China's "mountain changers."

SECTION TWO: INTRODUCING THE MOUNTAIN CHANGERS¹⁸

It is difficult to calculate the number of lifestyle migrants in Dali, as a prefectural whole, and the Old Town and immediate environs. All non-local Chinese and foreigners must officially register short and long-term residence (residing for more than one year) through the local Public Security Bureau. In 2011, the total number of long-term foreign residents in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture was reported as 1,100 (Zhongguo Xinwenwang 2011). This surely includes a large proportion of foreign students - mainly from India and Nepal - who are studying medicine at the medical college in Xiaguan. More recent statistics are not available but the official figures have surely

¹⁸ The mountain changers have attracted both Chinese and foreign media interest. Unfortunately, the focus of those reports tends to be on the lifestyle migrant, a trap this essay could easily fall into. We should, therefore, note that there are other kinds of migrants to Dali whose numbers could easily outnumber the mountain changers. These include labor migrants from within rural Dali, that is, other Bai and ethnic minorities leaving the smaller towns and villages to work as laborers and service personnel in the old and new towns of Dali.

increased. Hence the actual number of long-term residents in and around the Old Town of Dali is quite modest.¹⁹

The larger number of Chinese and foreigners who are not officially registered as long term residents should also be added to this figure. Certain Chinese prefer not to be officially registered. Quite often one partner will be registered and the other remains *incognito*. It is unlikely that foreign residents are unregistered as the visa and accommodation registration system is rigorously enforced. However, the issue here is that many will not be on long term residence visas, which are notoriously difficult to obtain in China. Instead, they are on tourist or student visas. This "short term visa" approach to "long term residence" is a major headache for foreigners, of which more will be discussed below. I conservatively estimate that the long term foreign resident figure has increased to 1,600 with 350 of those as "mountain changers" and that the unregistered cohort is 150. I further assume that the Chinese resident figure is much higher than the foreign resident figure. A figure of 5,000 Chinese long term residents is reasonable and errs on the conservative. Not all of these will be long term residents residing continuously in Dali. There is quite a mixture of long term and seasonal residency. The population of the Old Town is approximately 40,000. Hence, 5,500 is nearly fourteen percent. The large daily influx of domestic and foreign tourists, which at the peak season is easily several thousand, could also be added. Even the approximate nature of these figures begins to reveal the diverse and cosmopolitan makeup of contemporary Dali.

Table 1. Dali Lifestyle Migrant Composition

Place of Origin	China (other than Yunnan and Taiwan, Hong	Other Parts of Yunnan	Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau	Foreign Country		

¹⁹ Many thanks to Gerry Groot and an anonymous reviewer of these figures for their assistance. The final estimates are made by the author who takes responsibility for any inaccuracies.

	Kong and Macau)					
Number	32	12	5	15		
Type of Migrant	Seasonal Business Migrant	Seasonal Retiree	Long Term Migrant	Cultural Worker	Business Proprietor (e.g. hostel owner)	Streetside Vendor or Busker
Number	6	4	26	16	8	14

I have interviewed over sixty Chinese and foreign mountain changers over the course (2012-2015) of this research (see Table 1 for a composition breakdown). The author is not a migrant to Dali, but has visited the town at least once per year over the last decade. The interviewees came from a variety of sources, but mostly through introductions of locals or other migrants. A good proportion was also simply approached by the author during his many visits to Dali. Mountain changers, like mountains, come in all shapes and sizes. Here I provide a short list of some of the more indicative types of people that reveals the broad socioeconomic range engaging in seasonal or more permanent lifestyle migration to Dali. Firstly, the varieties of Chinese lifestyle migrant:

- The seasonal business visitor. These affluent entrepreneurs retreat to Dali at certain times of the year. Both winter and summer are pleasant in Dali so these visitors can choose to seek respite from bitterly cold northern winters or humid and hot summers. Some may have business interests in Dali and the surrounding region, but most do not. These days the ease of communication and travel make it possible to be more mobile and still diligently pursue business affairs. Many such migrants purchase residences in Dali that are not usually in the Old Town

where accommodation for purchase is rather limited and not as modern as many would prefer. Instead, they purchase property in the immediate surroundings, including the picturesque villages that dot the fertile Erhai Basin.

- The seasonal well-to-do retiree. This category includes those who have retired from full employment, usually government cadres of relatively high standing who have generous pensions and other incomes sources, such as multiple investment properties. These migrants may purchase residences or alternatively rent lodgings in one of the many hostels and boutique hotels. They spend their time in typical Chinese fashion exercising, eating, drinking tea, and engaging in more traditional leisure pursuits such as card games and mahjong.
- The full-time affluent mountain changer. This category includes persons and families who are relatively well off and have, for the already well cited reasons of escaping the pollution, congestion, and pressures of typical Chinese urban life, decided to move to Dali on a more permanent basis. Typically they will have purchased a residence, which in many cases actually means taking out a long term lease for up to twenty years. It is not unusual for these persons to have young children.
- The full-time small business entrepreneur. Many mountain changers move to Dali on a more permanent basis who cannot afford the luxury of being idle. Typically these migrants engage in local business. The most common form of business is running a hostel or small hotel (often a converted farmhouse). Those without the capital to do this may instead open a small shop, café, or restaurant.
- Streetside vendors and buskers. For those moving to Dali without the capital to rent property for conducting business, it is possible to engage in merchant activity or roadside performance (busking) along People's Road. This large category includes more permanent and seasonal mountain changers and transient backpackers/ travelers. Many engage in the self-manufacture of arts and crafts that are then sold on

a streetside stall that is often as simple as laying out a mat or small table. Those without arts and crafts skills might end up selling their labor in the service and tourist industry. Many hostels provide free accommodation to backpackers willing to work for several months as staff members. Some of the more talented musicians may also gain regular work in the many live music venues along Dali's bar streets. Mountain changers at the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder tend to be younger people without children.

- The Chinese cultural worker. By "cultural worker" I refer to those people who are already well established in one of the cultural arts, such as music, painting, and writing. A number of well respected musicians base themselves in Dali and travel to other locations for lucrative work. Established painters who already have had some success also have the luxury of being based in Dali while actively pursuing their careers. There are also quite a few well known writers in Dali.

In terms of the foreign mountain changers I have identified the following categories:

- Relatively affluent full time mountain changers who move to Dali to establish businesses, typically hotels, hostels, or cafes and/ or restaurants. These are usually middle aged or semi-retired professionals. Some have children. It is also common for such persons to have a Chinese spouse, in which case the visa issue is more readily resolved.
- Seasonal migrants. In this category are foreigners who have a particular skill, such as in performance or arts and crafts. They spend the busy summer season in Dali plying their trades and move to another location, usually outside of China, to catch another busy season in the second locale (for instance, several Australian leather workers oscillate between Dali and Byron Bay). Those who lack such skills may spend six months in their home country or Chinese eastern seaboard working fulltime and returning to Dali for the rest of the year to live off those earnings.

- Full time mountain changers without much economic capital who make a living in Dali as musicians, teachers, and/ or working odd jobs to get by.

Image 12. While many lifestyle migrants choose to live within the Old Town itself, an even larger number live scattered throughout the many villages in the surrounding area, either on the edge of Erhai Lake or close to the feet of the Cangshan Mountains. Some also undertake their own renovations, a daunting task especially for foreigners in an unfamiliar social environment. Where once there were "barefoot doctors" there are now "barefoot architects."



I have placed the foreign mountain changers in a separate category, given the quite distinct cultural and official obstacles they

face in making the transition to life in Dali. The greatest obstacle is the aforementioned acquisition of a Chinese visa. Long term residence and working visas are notoriously difficult to acquire and only a handful of foreigners consulted in this study had obtained one. Many foreign residents first make do with short term tourist visas. The longest visa in this category is ninety days. This then means the inconvenience and expense of leaving China to, most often Hong Kong or Southeast Asia, and applying for another tourist visa and returning to Dali. A common strategy is to enroll at one of the many Chinese language schools in Dali, either privately run or part of official education institutions. On payment of a fee the school will assist with the application of a student visa that will cover the "student" for six to twelve months. Many foreign mountain changers attend Chinese language classes, believing it will help with daily life. Conversely, quite a few attend few classes, an arrangement some have accepted. During periodic visa crackdowns, the Public Security Bureau visits to check attendance.

Comparing Lifestyle Migration in Dali to Experience Elsewhere

Lifestyle migration is a relatively new field of migration research. It fits broadly within the emerging body of literature on globalization and mobility, and the changing parameters and varied experiences of relationships with space, place, and identity. While referring to slight distinctions in form "lifestyle migration" is also known as "seasonal lifestyle migration," "retirement migration," "tourism-informed migration," "counterurbanisation," [sic] and "second home tourism." Benson and O'Reilly (2009) provide an overview of contemporary scholarship. Noting that there is some degree of diversity in lifestyle migrants' backgrounds, much of the research assumes that, as noted by Benson and O'Reilly (2009:2), "lifestyle migrants are relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life."

The literature has primarily focused on the experiences of more affluent migrants in developed Western countries, with very

little on the situation in other social contexts, and as far as I have ascertained, virtually nothing on the China situation. In the Chinese case there has been a great deal of work on rural to urban migration and the floating population (Solinger 1999, Pun 2005). However, as Notar (2006) notes:

Relatively neglected ... has been the increasingly significant reverse movement of urbanites to rural areas as part of China's emerging leisure culture and the transformation of place that this has wrought (2-3).

Much of this is in the form of tourism but as noted, those engaging in short and long term residency in more desirable locales is a growing trend. One of the few papers on this subject is Su Xiaobo's (2013) preliminary study of business migration to Lijiang which seeks to understand:

attempts to withstand restlessness and placelessness in the course of China's rapid development ... [and] what makes possible the discursive and practical articulation of "home" in contemporary China (149).

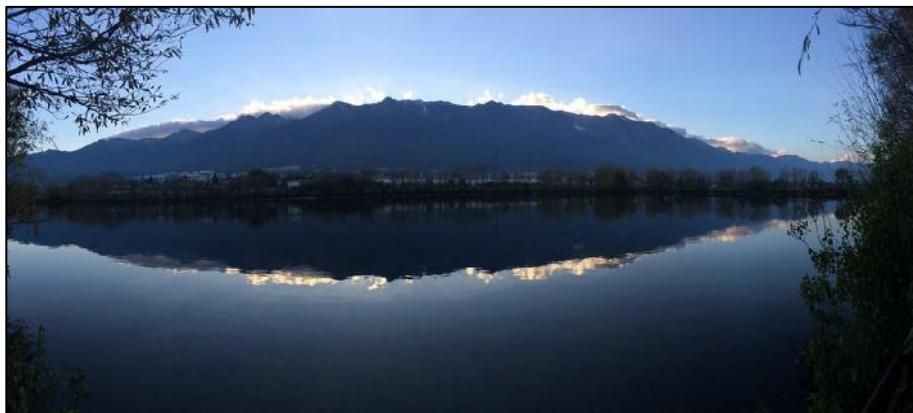
Su (2013:136) also writes that:

A growing number of people ... move to peripheral China—a symbol of tradition and comfort—for both economic opportunities and more livable lifestyles. For some of them, this move becomes a means of withstanding the atomized segregation that prevails in coastal cities, and allows individuals to build a new idea of "home" and to pursue a sense of inner freedom, albeit always in the light of mounting pressure from political control and social tension.

Salazar and Zhang's (2013) study of "seasonal lifestyle tourism" can also be added. As with most of the non-Chinese focused lifestyle migration work, both Su (2013) and Salazar and Zhang (2013) focus on relatively affluent elites. Dali, however, incorporates a much

broader socioeconomic spectrum and challenges the Eurocentrism and socioeconomic narrowness of previous work in this field.

Image 12. Dali's picturesque natural surroundings are often cited as a major attraction for lifestyle migrants. Spectacular sunrises and sunsets are shared with friends and family through social networking platforms such as WeChat, reminding us that part of the contemporary form of mobility and migration incorporates significant social others in daily life vicariously through the sharing of images.



While there are parallels in China with what is happening in Europe, North America, and Australia, there are also crucial differences. I will now briefly outline the major similarities and differences.

Firstly, on the similar and more positive side of the ledger, the vast majority of lifestyle migration experiences involve aspirational projections on a space/ place that contains the character/values migrants are seeking. These typically include living at a slower pace, developing and maintaining meaningful social relationships, and exerting control over time and activity allocation. This contrasts with the pressures, alienation, and speed of urban living and workplaces. This also involves quite an emotional attachment to place, especially in the early stages. As one informant told me:

Living in the old town has been a long cherished dream. A town nestled between mountains and water [a long standing Chinese aesthetic in cultural practice] where we rise and rest at will. The

air is clean and the sunlight is bright. It helps maintain a clear and bright mind and attitude towards life.

Secondly, lifestyle migrants tend to move from urban areas with high living costs to rural areas or semirural areas with lower costs of living. This is important for retirees and persons/ families giving up lucrative jobs, or for young people with limited savings.

Thirdly, lifestyle migrants seek a better work/ life balance. Many try self-employment. Indeed, there is often little choice if finances are tight. This shift to "being your own boss" gives a strong sense of control over personal time and activity allocation. As another informant operating a small business in Dali stated:

At first being my own boss was rather daunting. To tell you the truth, I was scared. But I stuck at it and managed to turn a profit. I found this sense of achievement exhilarating. I wasn't making anything near the about I was making in Beijing, but the sense of being free from a domineering boss was worth it.

Finally, lifestyle migrants, no matter where they are, attempt to distinguish themselves from tourists and develop an identity as "a local." This is probably one of the biggest challenges that, depending on location and background, involves linguistic and cultural obstacles. The transition from "tourist" to "local" is a standard rite of passage and invariably involves changes in attitudes towards place and people. Lifestyle migrants over time build up a more detailed local knowledge and gain insights into the ebb and flow of life that tourists cannot hope to capture.

In this connection, and turning our attention to the negative side of the ledger, many lifestyle migrants express frustration at the difficulty of developing friendships with locals. This experience is difficult to generalize as it depends on acquired linguistic and cultural knowledge. In the case of Dali one informant told me:

I have tried very hard to make friends with the locals in my village, but it is extremely difficult. There is just too much of a cultural and educational gap between someone from a big Chinese city

and a small rural village. Not to mention that I'm Han Chinese and they are Bai. Many of the older people don't even speak Mandarin, or if they do it is with such a thick accent that it makes it virtually impossible to have a meaningful conversation. The younger people are more approachable, but still they inhabit such a different world. The only Bai friends I have made are those who have been to college or university and work in the cultural field like myself.

The characteristics given above are common experiences for most lifestyle migrants regardless of location. In the case of China, however, there are a few important differences giving the experience of lifestyle migration certain "Chinese characteristics." I will discuss the notion of *jianghu* in more detail later.

Firstly, much of the focus thus far in the lifestyle migration literature examines British, European, Australian, and North American experiences of relatively affluent middle-classes relocating to rural areas and small towns. While this socioeconomic cohort certainly applies to China, there is a broader socio-economic cross-section in Dali than is typical in the Western experience. Dali, therefore, has certain conditions making it viable for different social classes to migrate and exist. Most notably the difference in living costs compared to the urban eastern seaboard and a place like Dali is quite large, although rents and other associated living costs have begun rising. Average wages in a place like Beijing are three or four times the amount in Dali. Moving from Beijing to Dali is a bit like moving from a "developed country" to a "less developed country." By contrast, migrants who move from the urban centers of the UK to rural France can expect a drop in the cost of living, but can still expect to be in the "first world."

Chinese mountain changers in Dali at the lower socioeconomic end of the spectrum refer to their lives as pursuing the Chinese dream of a "cheap and comfortable life." This is known as *xiaokang* and has deep roots in Chinese thought. In recent decades, the Chinese government has used the concept to promote its overall developmental goal, often translated as a "moderate level of development." As one young couple from Shanghai explained to me:

We don't have high expectations in terms of our lifestyle in Dali. We are just seeking to make ends meet. At the moment the cost of rent and food is quite low compared to Shanghai. We are content to join the locals at the market, cook our own food, and share a few cheap drinks with friends. We came for the clean air, sunshine, and relaxed way of life. We didn't come to Dali to live the high life.

Secondly, for foreign lifestyle migrants to Dali, the challenges in obtaining a long term visa are not difficulties migrants staying within the boundaries of the European Union generally experience. This gives the foreign mountain changer a greater sense of insecurity and exposes them to exploitation. For instance, I know a number of people who were significantly short-changed by a local English school. Because they were on student visas and officially prohibited from working, they could not complain to the authorities.

Thirdly, lifestyle migrants in Western countries complain about pollution and congestion, but I would suggest that at this stage in China's development the urban centers are far more polluted and congested than Western countries. This is a push factor with a great deal more force. As one informant from Beijing told me, "I said goodbye to Beijing and goodbye to PM2.5! I no longer have to wear a mask and at least breathe the air!" I also interviewed a number of couples who moved to Dali for the sake of their children's health.

Dali *Jianghu*: Towards an Understanding of Lifestyle Migration with Chinese Characteristics

Having outlined certain major similarities and differences between foreign and Chinese lifestyle migration I now focus in more detail on the "Chinese characteristics" of this phenomenon. In particular I would like to explore the Chinese notion of *jianghu* as a means of making sense of a certain kind of "mountain changer" and the spaces they seek to inhabit.

At the outset, I point out that Dali is home, permanently or seasonally, to many migrant scholars, artists, writers, musicians, and performers. In Chinese these can be broadly classified as *wenhua gongzuo zhe* 'cultural workers' and *wen hua jingying* 'cultural elites'.

These cultural elites draw on a longstanding Chinese cultural tradition of retreating to the mountains and lakes for aesthetic and poetic inspiration (see Salazar and Zhang 2013:83-85). This practice of social withdrawal - drawing upon Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist elements - of the *junzi* 'literati' was used by those wishing, for whatever reason, to physically distance themselves from the political center (Porter 2010). Beyond the desire to escape from the towns and cities, the mountains and water were also seen to intrinsically contain some element of beauty that could instill wisdom in those seeking knowledge. As Confucius is quoted as saying, "The wise find pleasure in water, the virtuous find pleasure in hills." As Salazar and Zhang (2013:85) note:

Spending time in the mountains or near watersides, elites could further refine their "gentlemen" persona, and purify their souls. These temporary stays were seen as a way of education that helps one to attain the ideal morality of both wisdom and virtuousness.

China's vast expanse of mountains, even in eastern China, provided the perfect environment for withdrawal. Of course in earlier days, Dali was generally not included on the list of such destinations²⁰ but now with the transport and mobility revolution, those seeking a place for a more contemplative and slower pace of life have many more options than the ancients.

²⁰ There are records of Indian and Japanese travelers (who were likely neither Buddhists nor very interested in Buddhism) visiting Dali during the time of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms. There was also a visit by the famous Chinese explorer and writer, Xu Xiake (1587-1641). The point I am making here that these regions were relatively "unknown" as favored destinations for hermitage from the point of view of those in eastern China remains valid.

Image 13. A typical example of Chinese "mountain and water" landscape painting.²¹



Mountains and water thus occupy a special place in Chinese cultural aesthetics. One of the classic types of Chinese landscape art is simply known as *shan shui hua* 'mountain and water painting'. In these paintings, humans or human habitation is generally very small, if depicted at all. This evokes a sense of harmony between nature and people. This style of painting is also extremely popular among the Bai who use it to adorn the walls of their courtyard houses, along with flowers, birds, butterflies, and bats (the latter being a symbol for luck).

Over time this practice of seclusion also intersected with the general development of travel for leisure. Chinese cultural elites were intimately familiar with a large corpus of landscape painting and travel writing, and actively sought out famous landscapes. In turn, many famous literati travelers were able to leave their own mark on cliff faces and rocks by inscribing calligraphic messages, adding to the overall cultural value (see Nyiri 2006). Hence, contemporary cultural workers cum mountain changers in this mold consciously draw upon well over a thousand years of writing and practice in this tradition. The Confucian tradition, however, contains a strong conservative element and an emphasis on the mainstream - respect and upholding patriarchy, authority, tradition, and so on. This is why Confucianism

²¹ Source: <http://tinyurl.com/nwzph5d>, accessed 29 November 2015.

can spawn an official revival in the present under the auspices of a once Marxist-inspired ruling Communist Party.

Image 14. An example of Bai style "mountain and water" landscape painting. The object in the foreground is a rubbish receptacle.



Yet, especially when combined with the philosophical attitudes of Daoism, this tradition has a more bohemian side. *Jianghu* captures this particular form of practice very well in that it continues the connection with water as it literally means "rivers and lakes." In terms

Image 15. Recreational drugs such as cannabis are now commonly taken all across China, although in August 2015, a severe crackdown on illicit drugs was being carried out. Cannabis grows wild in Dali, typically around the fields and between the villages, a remnant of a time when hemp was widely grown and harvested for its fiber and oil.²²



of physical geography, it refers to the marshlands and complex series of waterways found in many parts of eastern China. These spaces were seen as almost impenetrable and ungovernable (in the same way that James C Scott's notion of mountainous "Zomia" is "beyond the state"). Not surprisingly they were often the refuge for outlaws and bandits. Indeed, the famous fourteenth century novel set in the Song Dynasty of the twelfth century, *Outlaws of the Marsh* (also known as *The Water Margin* and *All Men Are Brothers* in English), recounts the story of thirty-six disaffected officials and soldiers. They are still loyal to an emperor whom they believe is being misguided by corrupt advisers, and take to the marshes to form a proto-guerrilla army. *Jianghu* also intersects with the popular literary tradition of knights-

²² Source: <http://tinyurl.com/ovnmmt>, accessed 29 November 2015.

errant, such as that depicted in the aforementioned *Heavenly Dragons*. By extension, this trope has come to refer to any person or persons who exist or operate in a liminal space between or beyond state and society. *Jianghu* is often used in colloquial speech to refer to someone who might be a bit shady or dubious, although the connotations are not exclusively pejorative.

As Zhang Jinghong (2014:25) notes in reference to her work on puer tea culture in Yunnan, with a large mobile population "jianghu" has come to represent 'a wandering space for ordinary people who leave their real native lands'. Many cultural worker mountain changers in Dali fit into this bohemian *jianghu* category. Firstly, they are seeking a place that provides aesthetic inspiration in the Chinese tradition of the recluse. The Cangshan Mountains and Erhai Lake provide the perfect backdrop. Secondly, they are also seeking a place far removed from the negativities of the metropolis: the pollution, the congestion, the daily stresses, and the overt political nature of life in contemporary China dominated by the CPC. Thirdly, they are seeking camaraderie with other fellow travelers who reject the mainstream and desire to live out their lives as freely as is possible in the PRC. One informant described Dali as a *shouliusuo* 'refuge', a place for wounded people who are rejected by, or who themselves reject, the mainstream. Dali is seen to have all these features and provide a space for "being in refuge" and "being healed." Many of the occupations the mountain changers pursue in Dali are beyond the traditional state confines of the *danwei* 'work unit'. In this regard their very forms of subsistence set themselves at a distance from Party-state.

A famous Chinese poet Zheng Shiping (b. 1962) with the *nom de plume*, Yefu, wrote a bestselling Kerouac-like book about life on the road. He moved to Dali in 2006. (The following is taken from Weikouwang 2014.) He is typical of the bohemian *jianghu* mountain changer that I describe here. Yefu was active in the demonstrations of 1989 and was arrested and jailed for a time. During the 1990s he lived in Beijing and built up a successful cultural business. In 2006 he sold the business, divorced his wife (giving her the lump sum of their property), packed his bags, and moved to Dali, saying he was weary of life in Beijing. Yefu came to Dali with virtually no money, and made a

living writing TV dramas while continuing his artistic writing. In addition to affordability, it was Dali's physical environment, the classic Chinese artistic attraction to "mountains and water" that appealed to him. Yefu also mentions that the culture of the local Bai people was also appealing.

Image 16. Now a global symbol for alternative culture, the cannabis leaf is seen across the Chinese urban landscape. It is often displayed by people who do not understand its original significance. In Dali the availability of cannabis originally attracted many recreational smokers, especially after it was widely reported in *High Times*, a major online cannabis forum and e-magazine. Cannabis smoking was done openly in public cafes and bar until a few years ago when the authorities initiated a major crackdown. Cannabis is still widely available but no longer as publicly visible as it once was. It has, nonetheless, become a major component of the alternative bohemian *jianghu* lifestyle.



Image 17. Dali is home to Chinese and foreigners of creative and artistic persuasions such as writers, painters, poets and, as pictured here, musicians.



The Bai are noted for fine artistic work in painting, sculpture, and music. When asked to explain in more detail, Yefu notes that all the great religions can be found in Dali:

Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Christianity (including Catholicism), plus the unique Bai belief system of *benzhujiao* 'nature worship'. This is a significant gesture in the direction of Dali's cosmopolitanism and relative openness to other cultures while at the same time retaining its own cultural meaning. At the time of the Tang and Song dynasties, Buddhism was the state religion in the Dali Kingdom. Later, other religions also arrived on the scene. This demonstrates the *baorong* 'openness' of this place and by extension this place's willingness to accept foreign cultures and foreigners such as myself. Dali is not *fengbi* 'closed' but instead is very international. People from various nations and all corners of China live here. The people I meet are interesting. I am friends with monks, Daoist priests, and many from the world of *jianghu*. In this small town I get to meet people of almost every hue from around the world. This is very important for a writer.

Image 18. Left: People's Road on a not so busy morning. Right: Two images of the kinds of streetside activity common on People's Road.



People's Road: A Unique *Jianghu* Space in China for the Acting Out of Cosmopolitanism and the Circulation of Global Signifiers

Yefu alludes to something crucial in the case of Dali as mountain changer destination, above and beyond its mountains and water. Here I refer to Dali's cosmopolitanism, its capacity to accept peoples of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds (see also Notar 2008). As noted in Section One, Dali has been an important trading center on a series of ancient trading routes for centuries. It is thus no surprise that the residents of Dali are willing to accommodate and

accept other cultures. In addition to all of the other favorable elements listed above, this is one of its great attractions for Chinese and foreign mountain changers.

Dali, like much of eastern China, is now well connected to global flows of people, ideas, and culture. Dali continues to absorb foreign cultures and styles. Today is an age of hyper modernity/ post-modernity/ liquid modernity providing increased ease and speed of physical mobility. Similarly, the circulation of images and symbols is now at a pace inconceivable a few decades ago.

In this final section of the paper I outline this contemporary sense of cosmopolitanism with special reference to a now iconic space for the gathering of people in quintessential Dali fashion. People's Road is aptly named as it has become the main focus for various individual and public performances. I use "performances" to mean the playing out of desires and identity rather the narrow sense of "a performance," although the latter is a common sight.²³

People's Road is approximately three kilometers long. Most of the road is closed to cars and other vehicles. It makes its way gradually downhill from the Cangshan Mountain side of the Old Town towards the Erhai Lake side. It is a mix of traditional and modern architecture that is now nearly completely occupied on either side of the road by shops, cafes, bars, and restaurants. The spaces in front of the buildings are occupied by buskers, people selling arts and crafts, and various snack foods. It is the place to gaze and be gazed upon, a unique space in all of China. In many Chinese cities the authorities do not permit people to set up streetside stalls. Doing so often results in a fine and confrontations with the *chengguan* 'city management' teams. Cognizant of the ambience the sellers provide for locals, tourists, and mountain changers, the Dali Old Town authorities have adopted a relaxed attitude. They only seem to get

²³ There is a conspicuous absence of local Bai performers and artisans along People's Road. While elements of Bai culture remain a strong theme in terms of architecture and other cultural objects (mostly packaged as tourist souvenirs and food), People's Road is ultimately a very cosmopolitan 'Chinese' space. The issue of how to best preserve and represent local Bai culture is addressed in another paper (Sigley forthcoming). I thank Brian Linden for his thoughts on this subject.

involved when disputes occur, or at certain festive times of the year when pedestrian numbers increase dramatically. This is crucial for lifestyle migrants at the lower end of the socioeconomic range as People's Road offers a space where they can engage in basic commerce and earn enough to live in Dali, whether temporary, seasonal, or more permanently.

People's Road is a cosmopolitan *jianghu* space where the clearest examples of Dali's contemporary production and intersection with global signifiers are evident. One of my favorite informants is Fangfang, an "old Dali hand" who has lived in the Old Town for ten years. He came in his teens and is now approaching thirty. He and his newly-wedded wife make a living selling bowls of tea on the side of the street. He also has an extensive collection of music CDs covering styles from the four corners of the globe. He used to find a place for himself along People's Road, but as he says, "That is getting too crowded now," and he has relocated to a more roomy and shady, but less busy position on an adjacent street. In between sips of tea and puffs on the ubiquitous cigarette he plays music through his small but powerful speakers. A steady flow of friends and local associates pass by. It is an excellent location to observe the local streetlife and meet various people calling Dali home.

Image 18. Hand drum shops have become numerous in the main tourist streets of Dali, including People's Road. Some of Yunnan's ethnic minorities have strong hand drum traditions, but this drum phenomenon is a pastiche of various forms exemplifying Dali's intersection with global images and signifiers. Many of the drums are decorated with what appear to be parodies of indigenous Australian dot painting. Three examples are pictured here. The bottom right image, depicting an elephant and use of colors associated with the local Yi people in neighboring Chuxiong Prefecture, is the exception.



Image 19. Christmas in its global and commodified secular form, has become a popular festival in China (Sigley 2007). It is particularly popular in Dali. The streets of the Old Town, especially around Foreigner Street and People's Road, are the site of heated snow spray bouts. Top Left: Young enthusiasts get into the spirit on Christmas Eve by spraying each other with fake snow. Top Right: Various Christmas paraphernalia for sale on the streets of Dali (but you are unlikely to see any specifically "Christian" images). Bottom: A special hybrid Chinese-Christmas chariot pulled by a reindeer provided for photo opportunities outside the main entrance to Dali Old Town.



Image 20. Braids and dreadlocks are popular in Dali with street side vendors offering braiding services. The braids in this instance are often inspired by traditional Tibetan forms and are sometimes combined with dreadlocks.



CONCLUSION: "EVEN DALI ISN'T LIKE DALI ANYMORE"

Dali is a unique location, a truly cosmopolitan context with lifestyle migrants from a broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds. Dali is unusual compared to other lifestyle migration destinations. In many studies of lifestyle migrants in a Western context, the preferred destinations are overwhelmingly rural or semirural locations. While tourism may be an important element, they are also seen by migrants as relatively free of crass commercialism, which is something they are seeking to escape by the very act of migration. Conversely, Dali is a touristic site that at peak season is packed with tourists. Even the low season can be quite crowded.

To understand why Dali remains so popular, I reiterate the main points discussed above. Throughout China, a social space heavily dominated by the authority of the Communist Party, there is nowhere like Dali that exhibits the coming together of a number of characteristics that make it attractive to lifestyle migrants from different socioeconomic backgrounds. These characteristics include climate and natural beauty, relative affordability, a space like People's Road where a living can be eked out among kindred spirits, a critical mass of artistic persons and venues to sustain a creative lifestyle, and the accessibility/ mobility factor.

Dali possesses such qualities and news of its status as an attractive destination is now widely disseminated in the Chinese

media. It is thus unsurprising that the number of short and long-term migrants is increasing. As noted earlier, the increased ease of mobility has made this possible. Dali has throughout its long history been a destination intimately associated with migration. But in a society of over 1.3 billion people it only takes a small proportion of people seeking a better life to find a favored destination like Dali straining from an increasing population seeking a new home.

A favorite topic of conversation of locals and mountain changers is how much better things were "in the old days" five to ten years ago when Dali was "undiscovered" by the teeming masses. Many an informant lamented the rapid change Dali and its immediate environment were undergoing, fearing that in a few years' time its appeal will be overcome and Dali would just be another congested, polluted, and alienating Chinese city. Bob, an English seasonal migrant with a job in the eastern city of Guangzhou, has been coming to Dali for the last seven years and in this time has noticed significant development and change. He told me:

I originally came to Dali to get away from the crazy noise and pollution of a city like Guangzhou, but now I'm beginning to fear that some of that is following me to Dali. Still whilst there is good sunshine and relatively clean air I will keep coming back. I've also made some good friends here. For me, Guangzhou is just a place for working, my real home in China is Dali.

Some of the more well off migrants have already begun plans to leave Dali and China altogether to places such as Canada and Australia. For those without this option, there is little choice but to hold onto their dreams for as long as possible. As Fangfang replied when I asked him where he would go once Dali was "ruined":

I guess I would have to downsize to a smaller town or even village. Yunnan still has many places that could work, but of course nothing will ever be like Dali, but then again even Dali isn't like Dali anymore.

This strikes at the heart of the "Dali paradox." As one Australian resident put it:

There is a possibly ironic contradiction in the wish for stasis amidst a search for change. It's Dali's capacity to accept "change" that lies at the heart of its appeal, most obviously in its open culture of accepting people from elsewhere. Yet it's precisely this process of change that offends people, including me, whose ideal is defined in the present moment. Perhaps Dali is change; people, on the other hand, lack the same internal dynamism.

As Benson (2011) notes, migration should be understood as part of a greater project of self-realization, as migrants seek to better understand themselves, and variously articulate and perform their identity in different contexts. This is a complex process of formulating a new sense of belonging in places that are, at least in the beginning, relatively unfamiliar. In this contemporary moment of large scale movements of people for refuge, labor, education, travel, and lifestyle the challenge of keeping pace with changes in the migration destination turns out to be just as challenging as adjusting to change in the place of origin. Dali is no exception and in this regard the local culture provides impetus to accept and incorporate "the outside" so that the "foreign" becomes "local," much to the chagrin of the mountain changers who want places like Dali to "stay as they are."

Postscript: I am finishing this paper after a recent return visit to Dali (October 2015) where to my surprise, a McDonalds has now opened on the intersection of People's Road and Fuxing Lu.

Image 21. People's Road is now home to Dali Old Town's first McDonalds. The sterile but familiar space of the McDonalds fast food restaurant exemplifies the globalized world making its presence felt in the spatial confines of Dali. The Chinese patrons are a mix of tourists and locals (especially high school students), who appear comfortable in and familiar with this environment. In this instance this is just as much a manifestation of eastern China encroaching on People's Road as it is of so-called "Westernization."



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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

Apeng 阿鹏

Bai 白族

baorong 包容

Baoshan 保山

Beijing 北京

benzhujiào 本主教

bingtuan 兵团

Cangshan 苍山

chai 拆

Chama gudao 茶马古道

chengguan 城管

Chuxiong 楚雄

Dai 傣

Dali 大理

Dali Kingdom Kingdom 大理国

Dali tianlong babu dianying cheng 大理天龙八部电影城

danwei 单位

Deqin 德钦

disuzhi 低素质

Erhai 洱海

Fangfang 方方

fengbi 封闭

Fuxing lu 复兴路

gaige kaifang 改革开放

ganjie 赶街

Gao Quan 高全

Guangzhou 广州

Han 汉

Honghe 红河

hongweibing 红卫兵

Huizu 回族

hukou 户口

Jianghu 江湖

jie 街

Jin Yong 金庸

Jinghong 景洪

jingqu 景区

Jinhua 金华

junzi 君子

Kunming 昆明

Lijiang 丽江

Lincang 临沧

luomahui 骡马会

Mao Zedong 毛泽东

Meilixueshan 美丽雪山

Ming 明

Nanfang sichou zhilu 南方丝绸之路

Nanzhao 南诏

Naxi 纳西族

puer 普洱

Qing 清

Renmin Lu 人民路

sanyuejie 三月街

shan shui hua 山水画

Shanghai 上海

Shengming Chanyuan 生命禅院

shouliusuo 收留所

Shuihuzhuan 水浒传

suzhi 素质

Tengchong 腾冲

Tianlong babu 天龙八步

Tubo 吐蕃

wenhua gongzuo zhe 文化工作者

wenhua jingying 文化精英

wenming 文明

Wu duo jin hua 五朵金花

Xi bu da kai fa 西部大开发

Xiaguan 下关

Xianggelila 香格里拉

xianjin shenghuo fangshi 先进生活方式

Xiaokang 小康

Xinhua nufang 心花怒放

Xinjiang 新疆

Xishuangbanna 西双版纳

Xizhou 喜洲

Xu Xiake 徐霞客

Yangren Jie 洋人街

Yefu 野夫

Yi 彝族

yishan tianhai 移山填海

Yuan 元

yugong yi shan 愚公移山

Yunnan 云南省

Zhaotong 昭通

Zheng Shiping 郑世平

Zhongdian 中甸

zhongyuan 中原

Zhongguo xinwen wang 中国新闻网